COTTON CHATS

FROM

DRAPER COMPANY

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PATENTED

JANUARY 19, 1892. APRIL 19, 1904

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ASA L. SHIPMAN'S SONS
MANUFACTURERS,
NEW YORK.

COTTON CHATS

By the Secretary of the
DRAPER COMPANY,
HOPEDALE, MASS.

No. 48. MARCH, 1906.

In the Saturday Evening Post for March 10th, 1906, there is an article by Mrs. John van Vorst, on child labor in cotton mills. Mrs. van Vorst has, by her own account, spent six weeks in various cotton mill towns. Her deductions from the information gleaned are somewhat similar to those of the Englishman, who on arrival in New York, noticed a yellow dog in the street. He immediately made an entry in his note book that all dogs in America were yellow. Mrs. van Vorst informs us that the children in cotton mills are employed in the *cleaning of the "saliva" from the frames.* As she implies by further testimony that the children of both sexes chew tobacco, it is evident that the average reader, unversed in cotton mill language, would conclude that the duties of child labor were to cleanse the machinery of the deposits of lavish expectoration carelessly flying from the mouths of the operatives in general. There is a difference between *saliva* and *sliver*, although it has been affirmed that the latter term was derived from the former, since the machinery appears to be spitting cotton. Mrs. van Vorst also displays her lack of technical knowledge in referring to *the boy at the card machine, making straps for the spindle.* It is hardly necessary to comment on this curious confounding of terms.

It is, however, pertinent to comment on the economic errors of the critic, which are similar in fallacy to her misinformation concerning machinery. While we ourselves deplore the necessity for the employment of child labor in any undertaking, we also deplore the extravagant and misleading implications made by those who seem to consider the manufacturer the embodiment of personal greed, ready to sacrifice any human considerations to increase his profits. The help and their children employed in the mills are much better off, all things considered, than they would

be were the mills to stop; and better financially and physically than they were in the employment, or lack of employment, which they knew before the cotton mills gave them their present opportunity. It is better to work and have good food, proper clothing and shelter, rather than have little or no work with poor food and insufficient clothing and shelter.

If our mills are to run, cloth must be produced cheaply enough to compete with foreign products in our own market. The present tariff, although considered high, allows the importation of some $50,000,000 worth of cotton goods in a year's time. Some of the managers of the many new mills recently built in England, boast that they will soon be sending us sheetings and other cheap grades. Mrs. van Vorst makes no suggestion of increasing tariff; neither does she make any special plea that she and her associates be allowed to pay higher prices for cotton cloth so that economy in production would not be so necessary.

Child labor does not give extravagant profits; in fact, there are no extravagant profits in the cotton industry. For proof, I could refer to the prices quoted for stock in cotton mill corporations, often purchasable at less than par, and there is no overcapitalization in cotton mill financing. The fact that less new mills are being built than in any other year of this century is, of itself, significant. Manufacturers would prefer to do away with the employment of small children, but in certain sections where parents must work, they often insist on having their children in the mill with them. There is a serious lack of sufficient good help at present, and if child labor is to be dispensed with, many mills must shut down. These conditions present an extremely difficult question; one that should be considered temperately, and with full knowledge of the subject. We believe the proper solution lies in the extended use of labor-saving machinery, and are constantly bending our efforts toward the production of a greater product per operative. The substitution of such machinery increases the labor supply, and usually increases the wages of the operative. Both limit the necessity for child labor, reducing productive costs in the most acceptable manner.

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SIZING FORMULA.

One of our travelling men recently ran across a mill which was getting excellent results from use of the following size formula: 250 gallons of water, 84 pounds of potato starch, 12 pounds of gloy, 8 1-2 pounds glycerol, 2 pounds of softening, 1 1-2 pounds of tallow.

This softening is prepared by mixing one pound of softening with 9 pounds of warm water and cooling. It is 2 pounds of this diluted mixture which is put into a batch of size.

We have no personal interest in such matters other than in helping out users of our own looms. We do not intend to recommend any special trade product above another and are perfectly ready to speak well of other substitutes should we find them giving equal satisfaction.

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We continue our series of Hopedale views in view of the apparent interest awakened in our readers.

This illustrates the "playground" within the Park territory. It has two ball fields and three tennis courts. It is only a few hundred feet from the Draper Company shops.

Ballou Memorial Park and Statue. Our town of Hopedale was founded in 1842 by Adin Ballou and associates as an experiment in the line of Christian Socialism. The property of the society was later purchased by E. D. and George Draper.

Memorial Library and Drinking Fountain. The illustration is hardly fair in its portrayal of the fountain—a creation of the noted sculptor Waldo Story, but gives a very good view of the Bancroft Memorial Public Library. Both are on our main street quite near the Draper Co. works.